

At Home with Luke Bryan

An interior designer takes on the monumental task of designing a guesthouse—as well as the main home and party barn—for Luke Bryan’s new property.

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It takes a special kind of visionary to be up for crafting three permanent structures comprising the estate of a musician as prominent as [Luke Bryan](#). Even more challenging is building a cohesive compound in rural Williamson County that consists of new construction yet has a weathered farmhouse feel to it, as if it were always a part of the land. But Chad James was up for the challenge.

In 2011, he started his own design firm, [Chad James Group](#). While the seven-man team is based in Midtown, it serves clients all over the country.

“We’re more than interior designers, we’re a lifestyles brand. Our clients come to us because they want that experience,” James says. “We offer more than architectural consulting and interior design; we offer that service of a brand and of a lifestyle.”

In 2012, Luke and his wife Caroline became subscribers to this CJG lifestyle, as well. The Bryans liked James’ style and direct business approach—so much that they hired the firm as both the consultant and interior designer for the project. Because the farm, which sits on more than 150 acres, was going to take a couple years to complete from concept to execution, James started with the 1,800-square-foot guesthouse so the Bryan family could move in while the 7,000-square-foot barn and just under 10,000-square-foot main house were being built.

Even though the three are separate entities, they all mimic the same style and feel. Nailing the vision the Bryans had in mind for such an extensive project wasn’t as tricky as it could have been, as Luke was clear upfront about the feel the property should exude.

“One day, we were out there and Luke said, ‘Have you ever been to Blackberry Farm? If you can make this farm look like Blackberry Farm, I’ll be the happiest man on this planet,’” James recalls.

Luckily for the Bryans, James had spent many Thanksgivings as a child at the East Tennessee resort and was also a fan of the Farm’s design. When he presented the completed guesthouse to them after they returned from vacation earlier this year, the Bryans told James it was far beyond what they ever dreamed. Luke named the property **“Redbird”** after his late sister, with whom he was extremely close. The two-story structure has three bedrooms, two bathrooms, a living room, a kitchen, an upstairs media room, a front porch, and a screened-in porch on the side. The walkway from the guesthouse leads down to a catfish pond.

When the designer began conceptualizing the interior of the guesthouse, he reverted back to his own upbringing. “It’s important to me that everything not look ‘Made in China’ yesterday—or so sleek and refined, because that’s not how we live,” he continues. “People want it to be beautiful, but so many times we think that means the mentality of the front room in Mom and Dad’s house that you weren’t ever allowed to go into. That’s not how we live today. We live in homes where we utilize every bit of the space.”

James was able to have some fun with the project, even going against Caroline’s initial wishes to not use taxidermy as a design element. “Sometimes clients will say no to stuff and I know they don’t really mean no—they just don’t understand how I’d use it,” he explains. While the Bryans were on vacation, James called Luke and said he’d found some things in the hunting room he wanted to use. The singer told James that he was a brave man—and that Caroline would never go for that. But James knew what he was doing. He picked the two most important deer mounts to Luke and his collection of antlers, and worked them into the guesthouse. Luke and Caroline both loved it. “There’s a way to do things so it doesn’t look macabre,” says James.

At the end of the day, the landscape is a welcoming, homey environment for the four Bryans—Luke, Caroline, and their two sons—who will reside in the guesthouse until their main home is complete in the next year or two.

“I want that farmhouse to be a place of refuge for them [for now]. It’s a fun little house with a lot of memories to be made,” James says.

- See more at: <http://nashvillelifestyles.com/entertainment/at-home-with-luke-bryan#sthash.frvKNHBO.dpuf>